



The Role of the Safety Investigator

Safety Investigators are integral to the implementation of the FMCSA mission.

By investigating high risk carriers and enforcing compliance with safety regulations, Safety Investigators (SIs) help to reduce commercial motor vehicle (CMV) crashes throughout the United States. The implementation of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA's) Comprehensive Safety Analysis 2010 (CSA 2010) initiative will institute changes to the enforcement and compliance program. While the measurement system and investigative process will be modified somewhat, the foundation of the SI's job will not change.

SIs currently:	SIs under CSA 2010 will:	Benefits include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct Compliance Reviews (CR) on all aspects of a high risk carrier's operation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct onsite comprehensive investigations on all aspects of a high risk carrier's operation. Conduct focused investigations targeted to specific safety problems when warranted by the safety performance data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive investigations allow an SI to fully investigate the highest risk carriers, similar to today's CR.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct CR at a carrier's place of business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct some investigations at a carrier's place of business. Conduct some investigations from the office (these are called offsite investigations and are used for carriers with less severe safety problems). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offsite investigations cut down on travel and allow an SI to contact and influence more carriers. Using offsite investigations, an SI will have multiple cases open at one time (i.e. conduct an investigation while waiting for records from another). Offsite investigations are neither clerical in nature nor "soft" and can lead to Notices of Claim (NOC).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cite violations discovered during CR and assess fines where appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cite violations and identify root causes of safety problems discovered during investigations, suggest remedies for deficiencies, and assess fines where appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determining the root causes and remedies to fix poor safety performance in a carrier minimizes the risk of recurring problems and enhances the impact of an SI's work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct one CR at a time from start through completion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage multiple investigations at a time that are in different stages of completion (about 5 open at once). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expands an SI's safety impact, allowing an SI to contact and influence more carriers with safety deficiencies and to correct problems before they lead to crashes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enforce regulations through CRs and financial penalties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enforce regulations through investigations and financial penalties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enforcement remains a priority for the Agency.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use and understand SafeStat scores and methodology to identify carriers with unsafe behaviors to be reviewed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use and understand the Safety Measurement System (SMS) to identify carriers with unsafe behaviors to be reviewed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMS assigns safety scores in 7 behavioral areas that are directly linked to crash risk. Translating violations to the 7 areas is logical, easy to understand, and easy to explain to carriers.

Frequently Asked Questions

Safety Investigators are dedicated and well trained to investigate and enforce carrier compliance. Given the changes that CSA 2010 will bring to the business processes within FMCSA's enforcement and compliance program, it is natural for SIs to have questions about how these changes will impact them. Some of the most frequently asked questions are addressed here.

Q. How will CSA 2010 impact a Safety Investigator's job?

A. Safety Investigators' jobs will still focus on enforcement and compliance and the foundation of an SI's job will not change though the investigative process itself will be modified. Some new skills and competencies will be needed, and some existing skills and competencies will have to be refreshed, but these are all within the realm of an SI's current role as an enforcement professional.

New and enhanced competencies include:

- **Case Management:** managing multiple (about 5) open cases at a time
- **Investigative/information gathering:** discovering new ways to identify breakdowns in carriers' business operations and identify remedies to mitigate "repeat offenders"
- **Education:** providing information to carriers on safety and compliance to mitigate "repeat offenders"
- **Report writing:** documenting safety violations (what is wrong) as well as the root causes (why problems exist) and remedies (how they can be fixed)
- **Analysis/computer skills:** understanding and using the new measurement system and associated investigative and analytical tools

Q. Will SIs get training on the new investigative process and associated skills?

A. Yes. FMCSA will provide all federal employees and state partners with training on the new compliance and enforcement program (CSA 2010). The training, which is expected to begin in the summer of 2010, will focus on the new processes (including the updated eFOTM) as well as some of the new skills and competencies.

Q. Will SIs have to reapply for their jobs?

A. No. Human Resources will update position descriptions as necessary but current investigators will not have to re-apply for their jobs. In fact, the big changes are more "day-to-day" process changes that will not have a significant impact on the higher-level documented

position description. Investigators' grades will not change.

Q. Some SIs have heard that new vacancy announcements are being created. Why are vacancy announcements being created if SIs don't have to re-apply?

A. Vacancy announcements are being created in anticipation of future hires. FMCSA wants to ensure that announcements accurately reflect the new skills/competencies, processes, and expectations of CSA 2010 as vacancies are identified in the future.

Q. With focused investigations, is it still necessary for SIs to understand all of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs)?

A. Yes. Understanding and applying all of the regulations will continue to be a vital part of an SI's job. A focused investigation can occur on any of the 7 behavioral areas and therefore, an SI will require knowledge of all of the regulations. Also, SIs will still conduct comprehensive investigations that, similar to compliance reviews, encompass a carrier's entire operations. The Agency will continue to issue NOCs, so SIs must know the regulations for that purpose as well.

Q. Does the new measurement system replace an SI's skills as an investigator?

A. No. SIs will maintain and enhance their investigative skills by delving into the operations of a carrier. The measurement system offers guidance into what type of investigation should be conducted, but the investigation itself and follow-on decisions about its scope, enforcement, and other follow on actions are up to investigators and their managers, as they are the experts. No measurement system can replace an SI's experience and expertise as to carrier behavior, history of contacts and problems, local or regional conditions, and issues, etc. SIs will continue to be responsible for the investigations, whether onsite or offsite, that will lead to Notices of Violation, Notices of Claim, Operations Out-of-Service Orders, guidance for carriers, and other follow-on actions expected to result in safer carrier operations.

CSA 2010 is an FMCSA initiative to improve large truck and bus safety and ultimately reduce CMV-related crashes, injuries, and fatalities. For more information about CSA 2010, visit csa2010.fmcsa.dot.gov.

